

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4088

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 9049

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MILI, SP

SUBJ: FORMER CHIEF OF HIGH GENERAL STAFF DIEZ ALEGRIA'S  
VIEWS ON THE SPANISH MILITARY

1. DIEZ ALEGRIA EXPRESSED THE FOLLOWING VIEWS TO ME ON THE  
SPANISH MILITARY IN A CONVERSATION ON DECEMBER 27.

2. THERE IS AN ACUTE NEED FOR MILITARY REFORM. THE UMD IS  
RIGHT IN MANY OF THE THINGS IT HAS SAID IN THIS REGARD, AND  
THE NEED IS STRONGLY FELT AMONG YOUNGER OFFICERS. CONTRARY  
TO THE OPINION EXPRESSED BY SOME, THE SECURITY AND ULTIMATE  
VIRTUAL CERTAINTY OF PROMOTION TO HIGH RANK THAT THE PRESENT  
SYSTEM OFFERS IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO SATISFY THE MIDDLE -- AND  
LOWER -- GRADE SPANISH MILITARY OFFICERS.

3. THE REFORMS NEEDED INCLUDE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MINISTRY  
OF DEFENSE; PROMOTION ON THE BASIS OF MERIT RATHER THAN  
SENIORITY; INCREASED SALARIES; IMPROVED EQUIPMENT; AND, FOR  
FINANCIAL REASONS AND TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY, A VERY SUBSTAN-  
TIAL REDUCTION IN THE SIZE OF THE ARMED FORCES.

4. DIEZ ALEGRIA SAID HE BELIEVES HE WAS REMOVED FROM  
HIS POSITION AS CHIEF OF THE HIGH GENERAL STAFF BECAUSE OF  
HIS STRONG ADVOCACY OF SUCH REFORMS. FOR INSTANCE, HE HAD  
DISCUSSED THE NEED FOR A MINISTRY OF DEFENSE WITH FRANCO AND  
ALTHOUGH FRANCO HAD BEEN NON-COMMITTAL DURING THAT DISCUS-  
SION, DIEZ ALEGRIA IS SURE THAT HIS REACTION WAS NEGATIVE.

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BECAUSE OF THIS, AND ALSO BECAUSE OF OTHER ACTIONS THAT HE

HAD ADVOCATED THAT WERE UNPOPULAR WITH THE MORE CONSERVATIVE TOP-RANKING MILITARY, HE HAD BEEN FORCED TO LEAVE.

5. DIEZ ALEGRIA SAID HE HAS LITTLE CONFIDENCE THAT THE PRESENT SPANISH MILITARY LEADERSHIP WILL UNDERTAKE THE NEEDED REFORMS. HE SAID SANTIAGO DE MENDIVIL IS A FINE OFFICER BUT NOT ONE WHO WILL TAKE INITIATIVE. THE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE IS GUTIERREZ MELLADO, WHO DIEZ ALEGRIA SAID THINKS EXACTLY AS DOES HE. THE SYSTEM HAS BEEN MANIPULATED SO THAT GUTIERREZ MELLADO WILL BE PROMOTED TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL IN THE SPRING. HE THEN WILL BE IN A POSITION FROM A RANK POINT OF VIEW TO HAVE GREATER RESPONSIBILITY, BUT DIEZ ALEGRIA IS NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT HE ACTUALLY WILL. THE KING LIKES GUTIERREZ MELLADO VERY MUCH, BUT OTHERS ARE OPPOSED TO HIM. THEREFORE, DIEZ ALEGRIA FEARS HE MAY WELL END UP IN SOME RELATIVELY MEANINGLESS JOB SUCH AS CAPTAIN GENERAL IN VALLADOLID.  
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